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Devon's OU Law alumni:

On the rise

BY JONELLA FRANK

Devon Energy Corporation, one of the nation's leading independent oil and gas producers, recently completed a move into the 50-story Devon Energy Center in downtown Oklahoma City. The tallest skyscraper in the state now houses the dynamic and respected energy company in which OU Law alumni play an important role.



Twenty of the employees who have settled in to new offices in Devon Energy Center are OU Law alumni. Of the 31 attorneys in the legal department, 15 are OU Law graduates, as are five of the six members of the legal department's leadership team.

Devon's top lawyer, Lyndon Taylor, is a member of the OU Law Class of 1984. He joined Devon in 2005 and became executive vice president and general counsel in 2007, leading the 46-person legal department.

Taylor noted that developing leaders is a shared mission of Devon and the OU College of Law. "In business, we're developing leaders — some of them are also lawyers — people with

the knowledge, skills and abilities to help us achieve success," he said. "It has been said that traditionally, you'd go get a lawyer if you had a legal problem that needed to be solved. That will always be true, but at Devon, we also have attorneys with a seat at the table helping us to plan our strategy and conduct our business, helping us to avoid problems and make sound decisions as we seek to comply with all the laws, rules and regulations in our industry."

In addition to Taylor, four more OU Law alumni are members of Devon's legal department leadership team. They serve as associate general counsels overseeing specific areas within the corporate structure.

Devon's OU Law grads are pictured in the rotunda of the new Devon Energy Center. Seated (left to right) are Carla Sharpe, Lyndon Taylor, Mary Nelson, Brandon McGinley, Connie Tatum, Andy Long, Kaci McCurdy, Andrea Miles, Glen Maynard and Chris Kirt. Standing (left to right) are Mark McDaniel, Sandy Schovanec, Stuart Edwards, Cherish Ralls, Justin Porter, Dan Nickel, Todd Blasdel, Steven Welch, David Harris and Mike Palmer.

"I have been really impressed with the caliber of students at the OU law school and the background they are getting in energy law and issues."

— Mike Palmer ('79)

Glenn Maynard ('87) leads the team that provides legal support to a number of corporate functions, including human resources, environmental health and safety, business information and technology, corporate security, and records and information management. Prior to working for Devon, Maynard worked with another energy company in various locations and roles. He has handled a broad array of traditional oil and gas matters as well as a number of class action and non-class action royalty matters. At Devon, Maynard enjoys the variety he experiences working with different groups within the company. "The most interesting part of my job has been being part of the growth of Devon and this department," he said.

Mike Palmer ('79) heads up the marketing and midstream team as well as the facility and real estate services team. His duties include working on transactions, claims, litigation, regulation and environmental issues, as well as training employees on laws and regulations and the internal policies of the business units he serves. "Since almost my entire career has been related to energy law, I appreciate the great foundation in oil and gas law that OU Law provided me," he stated. "And through my contact with students in Devon's intern program, I have been really impressed with the caliber of students at the OU law school and the background they are getting in energy law and issues."

Connie Dubberstein Tatum ('87) recently joined Devon and is responsible for the corporate affairs team. Prior to working for Devon, she was a partner in a law firm and later served

as deputy general counsel for another energy company in Houston. Throughout her career, Connie's practice has focused on corporate governance and compliance, mergers and acquisitions, securities law and real estate law. "I am excited about being a part of the Devon legal team and returning home to Oklahoma City," Tatum commented.

Steven Welch ('79) oversees a team of 11 other attorneys, three paralegals, and two administrative assistants in Houston and Oklahoma City that provides legal services, support and oversight for Devon's U.S. exploration and production activities, including transactions and litigation. Prior to joining Devon, Welch practiced for 27 years with an Oklahoma City law firm, where he served as a shareholder and member of the board of directors. "Although it was a very difficult decision for me to leave the firm, the transition late in my career from private practice to in-house counsel at Devon has far exceeded my best expectations," he said. "Devon is a wonderful organization that places the utmost importance on integrity and public responsibility."

Other talented OU Law alumni working in the Devon legal department are Mark McDaniel ('90), senior counsel; Sandy Schovanec ('84), senior counsel; Carla Goetzinger Sharpe ('84), senior counsel; Chris Kirt ('00), counsel; Justin Porter ('06), counsel; Brandon McGinley ('01), senior attorney; Andrea Miles ('06), senior attorney; Daniel Nickel ('04), senior attorney; Andy Long ('08), attorney; and Cherish Ralls ('06), attorney.

Five graduates of the OU College of Law work at Devon in areas other than the legal department. One serves with Taylor as part of the Devon management team.

David Harris ('98), is Devon's vice president, corporate finance and treasurer. He previously served as associate general counsel leading the corporate affairs team. Harris is responsible for all of Devon's corporate finance, capital markets, debt and cash management, acquisitions and divestitures, and insurance activities. Prior to joining Devon, he was a partner in the Dallas office of a large international law firm, specializing in corporate and securities matters.

Other alumni employed in other departments of the Devon organization are Mary Nelson ('86), manager of regulatory affairs in the marketing and midstream division; Todd Blasdel ('02), field landman in seismic operations; Kaci McCurdy ('09), division order analyst; and Stuart Edwards ('12), land intern.

The OU Law connection runs deep with some of these Devon employees. The three alumni who serve as senior counsels have family members with OU Law ties.

Mark McDaniel, whose father is Tom McDaniel ('63), is a member of the legal department's exploration and production team. He joined Devon in 2005, having previously served as assistant general counsel and assistant secretary for another energy company and practicing law with an emphasis on litigation, energy law, administrative law, corporate law and environmental law. "OU Law provided me with a great education and prepared me for my career," he said.

Carla Sharpe, who provided legal support for the business group responsible for the development of Devon's new headquarters, mentioned the upcoming year will be

memorable. "Next year will be a big year for the Sharpe family when our daughter, Anden, will graduate from OU Law. She will be recognized as a third-generation graduate with both her parents [Carla ('84) and G. Calvin ('85)] there as OU Law graduates, along with her grandfather Glenn Sharpe ('63), who will be honored as a 50-year graduate of the law school," she stated. "We are definitely very proud to be an OU Law family."

Another family with multiple OU Law connections is that of Sandy Schovanec, who provides legal support for Devon's human resources group. Schovanec came to Devon after 25 years with an Oklahoma City law firm, where she was a shareholder and director. "I believe OU Law provided me with an excellent legal education and has made efforts to keep in contact with me once I started the practice of law," she commented. "My family has several connections to OU Law. Not only did I attend, but my brother-in-law, Philip Schovanec ('94), did as well, and my daughter, Ashley, will start at OU Law next fall."

"We are definitely very proud to be an OU Law family."

— Carla Sharpe ('84)

The Devon OU Law alumni are rightfully proud of their company, a member of the FORTUNE 500®, that has been named for the past five years to the FORTUNE 100 Most Admired Companies® and 100 Best Companies to Work For® lists. It is gratifying to know they are also proud of their connections to the University of Oklahoma College of Law. **SL**